596 wealthy families. Polyandry is prohibited in Lolo society; but because of their loose sexual concept, polyandry is sometimes secretly practiced. Young girls in their teens could have free [836] love and intercourse with young men, especially male cross-cousins with whom they disport and have fun. This will be discussed in more detail later on.

595 [55] Polygyny is often motivated by the political ambition of Lolo leaders who want to expand their influence through 557 the connections of their wives' families. Hu Hsing-min, for example, was one of them. Considering that the influence of Li-ch'ü shih's branch alone was not strong enough for him, he also married Wu-ch'i shih to increase his power and status through connection with the Wu-ch'i branch. In a Lolo polyg- 595 nous family, wives have equal social status. They call each other sisters. Without regard to their own ages, the first wife is the elder sister and the second wife the younger sister. Each wife has a separate household and property, unlike the Han-Chinese, among whom wife and concubine stay together but have unequal social position. Before the Lolo man takes a second wife, he has to appease his first wife by offering her oxen or sheep, or sometimes a horse. He also has to reach [607] an understanding with his wife's brothers by entertaining them with food and wine. Without their consent in advance, he may run into trouble and have disputes that will develop into a clan feud.

As a whole, these marriage practices not only regu- 581 late the Lolo's sexual life and their kinship and clan structure, but also their daily behavior and even their political and economic activities. The marriage relationship has the same importance in Lolo society as in other societies. Marriage is the biggest event and the most important transitional stage in life as a young man and woman go from love to marriage and from marriage to the establishment of the family.

000 Adolescence is the beginning of the sexual period, during which, no matter whether male or female, all are eager to act. But every society has its own traditions, and the behavior of the male and female is subject to their influence. 582 Lolo customs prefer early marriage. The woman's marriageable age is usually odd-numbered, the favored age being nine, eleven, thirteen, fifteen, seventeen, and nineteen. During 302 her childhood the girl usually keeps her hair in a single braid 884 behind the head. At the time of marriage, she changes her hair style to two braids doubled up on the head. Therefore, a double braid and a single braid serve respectively as symbols of the married and unmarried women. But if a girl is

302 seventeen and still not married, then her parents will usually
884 set a date to hold a ceremony for the girl to have her braid parted and doubled. During the ceremony they kill sheep, pigs, and other animals to entertain relatives and friends. It signifies that henceforth the girl has come of age and can have sexual freedom without interference.

836 Whether in a forest or thicket, whether beside the mountain stream or in wild fields, a young Lolo male and female could make love to each other. Provided that they do not violate marriage traditions, unmarried male and female could have affairs among themselves. This is especially true of cross-cousins who, because of their preferential marriage privilege and close contact due to kinship, could freely make love, and illicit affairs have always developed.

584 As a first step in marriage, the parents usually make the selection and then send a matchmaker to do the negotiating. Originally the matchmakers were mostly white Lolo slaves. If the paternal aunt or the maternal uncle has a daughter, matchmaking is fairly easy; there being mutual obligation on both sides, they dare not [56] make any commitment with another clan. After a mate has been chosen, the matchmaker
[187] will get the consent of the girl's family to ask a pi-mu to match the horoscopes of the intended couple and to divine whether the marriage would be auspicious or not. If it is found to be unlucky, the matchmaker will not come back again. Sometimes, because of their kin relationship or because of the attraction of the girl's looks, the two families would disregard the result of fortune-telling or divination and proceed with the marriage anyway.

583 After both families have agreed to the marriage, the matchmaker then goes back and forth between the two to negotiate for the betrothal gift or money. The amount of cash to be paid by the man's family depends upon the family's financial ability. Generally, a black Lolo family pays a betrothal gift of from 500 to 700 or 800 ounces of silver. (At the time of the author's stay in Lei-po, one ounce of silver was equal to 160 dollars of Chinese national currency.) Sometimes the betrothal gift may be as much as 1,000 ounces. Because of their low social status, the white Lolo pay only 100 or 200
[567] ounces of silver. For the daughters of household slaves who accompany the mistress in marriage, no gift is necessary.

584 After the betrothal money is settled, then comes the engagement. First, the man's family sends the matchmaker and others of the household with gifts to the girl's family. At that time only a part of the betrothal money, usually about